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TO RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
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INFO RUCNMER/MERCOSUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS ASUNCION 000572

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STATE TO KBEAMER WHA/BSC, ACONDO OES/ENRC, DEPT OF INTERIOR
TO DR. KAUSH ARHA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ECON](#) [SENV](#) [ETRD](#) [PA](#) [PGOV](#)
SUBJECT: WHMSI CONFERENCE IN PARAGUAY

¶1. (U) Hosted by the Paraguayan Ministries of Environment and Tourism and Guyra Paraguay (an environmental NGO), the third Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative (WHMSI) Conference was held from July 22 to July 25. Representatives from NGOs such as World Wildlife Fund (WWF), international conventions such as the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), and representatives from various Western Hemisphere countries, including the U.S. Department of Interior, attended the conference. Key priorities identified for WHMSI were: to build country capacity to conserve and manage migratory wildlife; improve hemispheric communication on conservation issues of common interest; strengthen the exchange of information needed for informed decision-making, and; provide a forum in which emerging issues can be identified and addressed.

¶2. (U) During the conference, members worked towards continued cooperation, provided updates on what had occurred since the last WHMSI conference in 2006, and discussed a capacity building proposal from the Organization of American States (OAS). There were also thematic sessions on marine turtle conservation, adapting important migratory species habitats in the face of climate change, and on the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Program. Members made improvements and suggested changes to the program, which awards grants funded by Congress to organizations and governments. Members of the initiative also discussed the syntax of the WHMSI Purpose and Organization structure and the accuracy of the Spanish translation.

¶3. (U) The Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Interior, Dr. Kaush Arha, attended WHMSI for the U.S. government. While in Paraguay, DAS Arha attended a dedication ceremony at a cultural center celebrating the designation of Bahia de Asuncion (a wetland area north of Asuncion) as an important site for migratory bird landings. He was given a tour of some of Paraguay's distinct ecoregions by members of Guyra Paraguay. DAS Arha also met with key environmental leaders, including the Executive Director of Guyra Paraguay (Alberto Yanosky), the Paraguayan Minister of Tourism (Liz Cramer) and both the current and incoming Secretaries of the Environment in Paraguay. With these leaders, he discussed Paraguay's environmental challenges and opportunities. DAS Arha expressed his thanks for his welcome in Paraguay and his support for and interest in environmental issues in Paraguay and international cooperative initiatives such as WHMSI.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: Although there were many competing interests from participating countries, the conference fulfilled its key objectives and participants agreed on the way forward. This conference provided a good example of productive multilateral regional cooperation. END COMMENT.

¶5. DAS Arha did not have an opportunity to clear this cable.

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